



## LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE

TESTIMONY OF JANET STOLFI ALFANO, MSW & JENNY KOHL, MSW

MARCH 9, 2023

Good morning Senator Kushner, Representative Sanchez, and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. We are Janet Stolfi Alfano, the Executive Director, and Jenny Kohl, the Community Outreach Coordinator, at The Diaper Bank of Connecticut. We appreciate the opportunity to testify before you this morning in support of HB 6859: AN ACT CONCERNING PREDICTABLE WORK SCHEDULES & S.B. 1177: AN ACT CONCERNING ONE FAIR WAGE.

Since 2004, The Diaper Bank of Connecticut has been helping families support their basic health and hygiene needs by providing diapers, period supplies and incontinence products to Connecticut residents. We have provided over 34 million diapers alone since we started in 2004. We know the impact not having enough diapers has on families with low and moderate incomes.

### **HB 6859: AN ACT CONCERNING PREDICTABLE WORK SCHEDULES**

Many of these same families have unpredictable work schedules. Every worker in Connecticut should have access to a stable job that provides opportunity and treats them with respect. Tens of thousands of workers in Connecticut begin their work week without knowing their schedule. They work "on-call", with unpredictable, fluctuating workweeks that they can't control. They cannot rely on their jobs to provide stability or a reliable paycheck. They are denied full-time hours, so they don't receive benefits - and they cannot seek another job, as they don't have a fixed schedule. The effects are devastating for working families - and this impact has been even more devastating for low-wage workers, especially people of color.

This bill gives workers the stability they need, ensuring that more than 140,000 retail, food service, long-term care, and hotel workers have more predictable schedules and paychecks. The bill will give part-time employees the opportunity to work more hours, requiring employers to offer extra shifts to current workers before hiring additional staff. More than anything, it will ensure that employers treat their employees with respect, setting their schedules in advance and providing compensation for any late changes.

In addition, predictable scheduling will also help businesses. Companies and stores that have adopted predictable scheduling have less employee turnover, better attendance, and higher productivity. Workers appreciate stability, and reducing their stress helps everyone - be it a big box store, a retail chain, or a fast-food restaurant franchise. The experience in cities like Seattle

or New York, or among the companies that have adopted predictable scheduling, has been clear; the flexibility from having workers on call has little benefit when employees don't show up or leave the job, tired of feeling disrespected.

When you can't rely on your job it makes it impossible to pay bills, plan childcare, stay healthy, and get ahead. Connecticut working families deserve to have jobs that respect their time - and give them a chance to thrive and prosper.

### **S.B. 1177: AN ACT CONCERNING ONE FAIR WAGE**

We also know that many of the families we serve are affected by the subminimum wage here in Connecticut, making it hard to afford basic essentials. The subminimum wage affects a workforce of nearly 70,000 tipped workers in Connecticut. 70% are women and 36% are people of color. One fair wage would eliminate the subminimum wage, forcing employers to pay tipped workers the full minimum wage and allow them to continue earning tips.

Connecticut's minimum wage is \$14 per hour. It will go up to \$15 per hour June 1, 2023. The subminimum wage for tipped workers is \$6.38. When the minimum wage goes up, the subminimum wage will remain the same. Tipped work is overwhelmingly low-wage work. Some tipped workers at popular restaurants do well, but they are the exception, not the norm.

Workers in our state cannot wait any longer. We strongly urge you to support HB 6859: AN ACT CONCERNING PREDICTABLE WORK SCHEDULES & S.B. 1177: AN ACT CONCERNING ONE FAIR WAGE.

Sincerely,



Janet Stolfi Alfano, MSW  
Executive Director  
The Diaper Bank of Connecticut  
Resident of Southington, CT



Jenny Kohl, MSW  
Community Outreach Coordinator  
The Diaper Bank of Connecticut  
Resident of Waterford, CT